

# Collaborating With Strangers @ Public Library Directors Annual Meeting



Bess de Farber, CoLAB Planning Series® Creator/Facilitator,  
Libraries Grants Manager

April Hines, Journalism & Mass Communications Librarian

Laura Spears, Assessment Librarian

# Video Plays as Profile-Signs Are Completed



Steven Johnson, creativity historian

[Where Good Ideas Come From](#)

# What is the CoLAB Planning Series®?



*If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.*

# Why Are We Here?

1. Describe history of how CoLABs originated and matured since 2002
2. Discuss the types of CoLAB Workshops presented and past sponsors
3. Share what we've learned from facilitating CoLABs
4. Demonstrate the CoLAB Workshop for individual participants

# Community Foundation of Broward



**School of the Arts at FNU**

**Music Department** - provides performance, education and enrichment in Music Training

**Music Majors:**

- 1. Bachelor of Music (B.M.)
- 2. Bachelor of Music Education (B.M.E.)
- 3. Bachelor of Music Business (B.M.B.)
- 4. Bachelor of Music Therapy (B.M.T.)
- 5. Bachelor of Music Administration (B.M.A.)
- 6. Bachelor of Music Composition (B.M.C.)
- 7. Bachelor of Music Performance (B.M.P.)
- 8. Bachelor of Music Recording Arts (B.M.R.A.)
- 9. Bachelor of Music Sound Engineering (B.M.S.E.)
- 10. Bachelor of Music Studio Arts (B.M.S.A.)
- 11. Bachelor of Music Teaching (B.M.Te.)
- 12. Bachelor of Music Theater Arts (B.M.T.A.)
- 13. Bachelor of Music Visual Arts (B.M.V.A.)
- 14. Bachelor of Music Writing (B.M.W.)
- 15. Bachelor of Music Production (B.M.Pd.)
- 16. Bachelor of Music Management (B.M.M.)
- 17. Bachelor of Music Marketing (B.M.Mk.)
- 18. Bachelor of Music Public Relations (B.M.P.R.)
- 19. Bachelor of Music Social Media (B.M.S.M.)
- 20. Bachelor of Music Event Planning (B.M.E.P.)
- 21. Bachelor of Music Fundraising (B.M.F.)
- 22. Bachelor of Music Grant Writing (B.M.G.W.)
- 23. Bachelor of Music Non-Profit Management (B.M.N.P.M.)
- 24. Bachelor of Music Volunteer Management (B.M.V.M.)
- 25. Bachelor of Music Community Outreach (B.M.C.O.)
- 26. Bachelor of Music Cultural Heritage (B.M.C.H.)
- 27. Bachelor of Music International Studies (B.M.I.S.)
- 28. Bachelor of Music Global Studies (B.M.G.S.)
- 29. Bachelor of Music Cross-Cultural Studies (B.M.C.C.S.)
- 30. Bachelor of Music Diversity Studies (B.M.D.S.)
- 31. Bachelor of Music Inclusion Studies (B.M.I.S.)
- 32. Bachelor of Music Social Justice (B.M.S.J.)
- 33. Bachelor of Music Human Rights (B.M.H.R.)
- 34. Bachelor of Music Environmental Studies (B.M.E.S.)
- 35. Bachelor of Music Sustainable Development (B.M.S.D.)
- 36. Bachelor of Music Peace Studies (B.M.P.S.)
- 37. Bachelor of Music Conflict Resolution (B.M.C.R.)
- 38. Bachelor of Music Humanitarian Studies (B.M.H.S.)
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# University of Arizona - Sonoran Desert

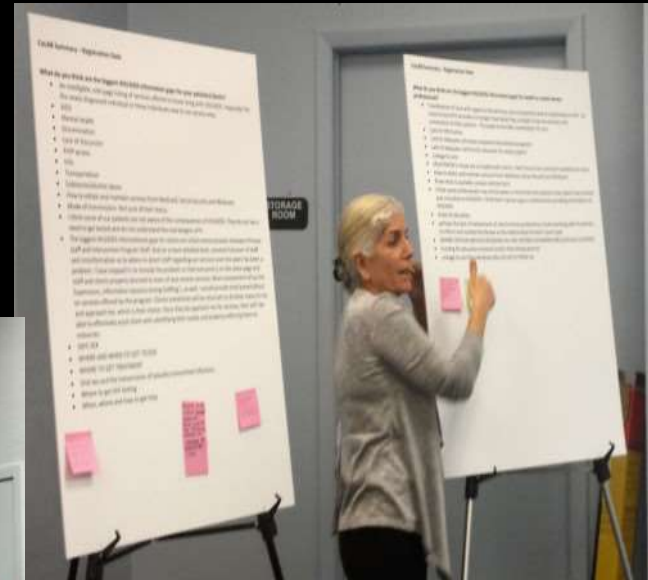
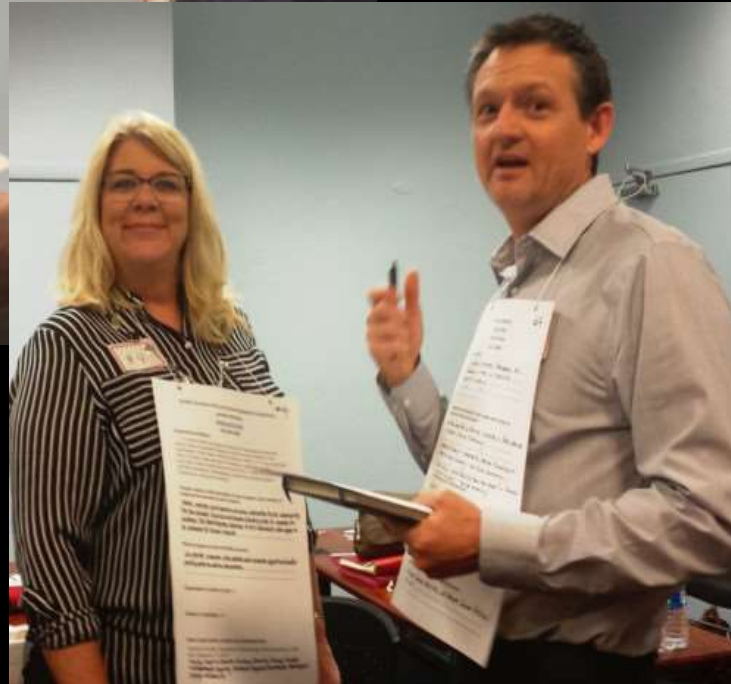


# CoLAB @ Conference

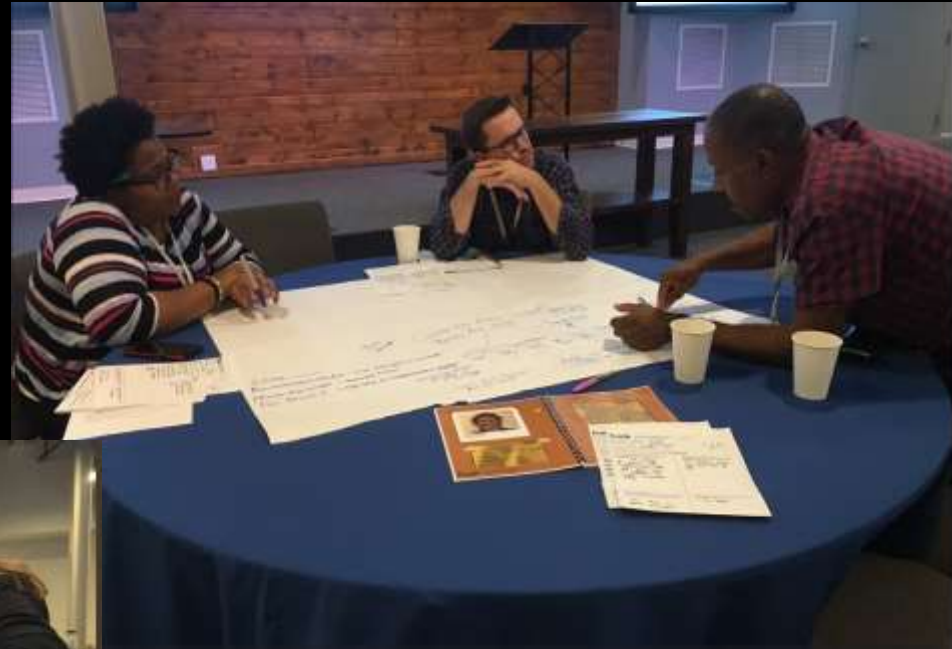
## Association of College & Research Libraries



# HIV/AIDS Information Dissemination CoLAB @ a Public Library



# Collaborating With Scholars to Ignite Social Change - *frank* (UF College of Journalism and Communications)



# University of Florida College of Arts CoLAB



# UF Sex and Gender Differences in Health CoLAB and UF Women in Science and Engineering Mentoring CoLAB



# Collaborating with Strangers on Scholarship in UF Libraries



# UF Collaborating with Strangers Workshop and UF Collaborating with Strangers on Sustainability



# Other CoLAB Presentation Content

1. Five ways people combine forces with others
2. Principles of asset-based community development
3. Ways to increase creativity in daily life

# Idea Boards for Sharing Connections Discovered, New Learning, and Next Steps



# Sponsors of CoLABs



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS



# CoLAB Principles That Produce Desired Results:

- Value of face-to-face conversations
- Self-selection to participate
- Welcoming participants regardless of their situation
- Quality of profile-sign questions
- No right or wrong answers
- Minimal presentation, maximize meeting time and structured facilitation
- Creating comfort with ambiguous nature of workshop
- Session is customized for participants
- Food is not the focus

# Pre-Workshop Surveys

1. Rate your comfort level for the following statements:

I am comfortable in...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
face-to-face conversations with others I do not know				X	
Talking to "strangers" with interests, knowledge and skills different from my own.				X	

2. In a month, on average, with how many "strangers" do you have conversations about:

- a. Research 0\_\_\_ 1-2 X 3-4\_\_\_ 5+\_\_\_
- b. Class assignments/projects 0 X 1-2\_\_\_ 3-4\_\_\_ 5+\_\_\_
- c. Career goals/mentoring 0 X 1-2\_\_\_ 3-4\_\_\_ 5+\_\_\_
- d. Professional passions (topics, issues that are important to you) 0\_\_\_ 1-2 X 3-4\_\_\_ 5+\_\_\_
- e. Projects or events 0\_\_\_ 1-2\_\_\_ 3-4 X 5+\_\_\_

3. Other comments on your experiences having conversations with "strangers" in general:

I am uncomfortable talking to folks I don't know.  
I find it difficult to approach / start conversations.

**80%** of students from two public relations classes agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable having face to face conversations with others they don't know.

yet...

More than **50%** said they were having fewer than two conversations per month with strangers about class projects and career goals..

“ I am very uncomfortable in groups of strangers but okay with one-on-one interactions.”

# Profile-Signs

In a *Collaborating with Strangers on Sustainability Projects at the University of Florida* workshop:

- 46 undergraduates, 16 graduate students, 8 faculty and 5 staff attended.
- A wide range of academic departments on campus were represented, including accounting, architecture, engineering, sociology, public relations, sculpture, construction management and the health sciences.
- Listed skill sets included everything from design techniques and expertise in (GIS) software to fundraising, computer programming and project management.
- Projects included green housing, local gardens, downtown revitalization and water resource development.

First Name: GERONIMO ETCHECOURY

Hometown/state/country: ATLANTIDA / URUGUAY # 49

Department or research area: ENGINEERING

☐ Faculty ☐ Post-Doc ☐ Graduate Student ☒ Undergraduate Student ☐ Other

What is your area(s) of study and/or research interest and why are you passionate about this work? (narrative)

• EDUCATION FOR THE YOUTH

I AM INTERESTED IN GREEN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS (MAINLY IN DEVELOPING NATIONS) WINDMILLS, PV PANNELS. INSTALLATION.

What are your strongest skills? (especially in relation to project ideas, planning, design, implementation, communication, funding, promotion or sustainability topics) (narrative or list)

- I AM GOOD AT MOTIVATING PEOPLE
- GOOD COMMUNICATOR
- GOOD MEDIATOR (CONFLICT RESOLUTION)
- GOOD AT TEACHING
- I AM A HAPPY PERSON IN NATURE ☺

What projects or studies are you developing on your own or with others? (narrative or list)

- CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOPS
- CIVIL ENGINEERING CLASSES

What outreach activities, groups or networks are you involved in or support? (narrative or list)

- ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS - INTERNATIONAL PROJECT IN BOLIVIA (WATER TREATMENT)
- AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS

What's one thing that most people don't know about you?

- I AM AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FROM URUGUAY
- I AM A NOVEL WRITER
- I AM GOING TO BE A PRESIDENT (JK, MAYBE)

[illegible]

## Ghana

# CoLAB Workshop Observations



“Participants often began 'speed meetings' hesitantly. However, they quickly saw the value of the meetings. The change in environment was obvious by the third round. There were clearly observable changes with an increase in volume of discussions, participants standing closer together, and greater animation among the participants including pointing at features on each other’s signs.”

-David Miller  
CAPES Evaluation Report

“You’re just like me!” – overheard from a participant at a Books as Objects of Study CoLAB. Participants giving each other a high five and laughing.

“I forgot I was nervous by the end!”

# Post-Workshop Surveys on Profile Signs

## CoLAB Workshops Comprehensive Evaluation Report

### View all Participants Feedback Results

#### Interesting Facts:

- 93.18% were about evenly distributed between rating the workshop good or excellent.
- When asked if they would attend a workshop like this again, 88.18% responded positively.
- 77.27% percent of participants reported they "felt more confident approaching people they do not know."
- 90.45% percent of participants responded that they would recommend the workshop to other students/faculty

## Survey Results

### Types of resources discovered:

- People with a different perspective
- People with a different background
- Possible collaborators
- New ideas for collaboration
- Learned of a new club or organization
- Meeting people with similar interests
- Development communication skills with strangers
- No resources yet with plans to follow-up with participants

#### POST-SURVEY (complete at the end of the session)

1. My overall CoLAB evaluation: ☒ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
2. I would attend a workshop like this again: ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. I would recommend this collaboration process to other students/faculty: ☒ Yes ☐ No
4. Has this experience helped you realize the value of speaking to people you do not know about their assets, skills and passions? ☒ Yes ☐ No

5. CoLAB Results:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel more confident in my ability to approach people I don't know	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am more comfortable talking to "strangers" in different disciplines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(If applicable) I am more comfortable talking to "strangers" in different positions in their academic or professional careers (e.g., student to faculty)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Did the CoLAB facilitation process help you access new resources, knowledge and/or grant seeking information?  
If so, please describe. Absolutely! I learned so much about my discipline, other disciplines, and opportunities for collaboration.
7. What was the most useful part of the workshop and why? Meeting other experts in a neutral space, who are also seeking new connections.
8. What surprised you about the speed meeting process? It went by so fast! I was deep in conversation & didn't want to part.
9. During the presentation, what information was most useful and/or interesting? Asset-based community development info
10. Would you be willing to participate in a 20 minute follow-up interview in the next 2-3 months?  
☒ Yes ☐ No (Please list email if Yes Enthusiastically so.)

# Idea Boards - What Are Your Next Steps?

Were next steps mostly about following up with others or expanding on what they've learned?

Learn about 2020 health goals

I plan to look up ways I can use a career in nursing to positively impact other communities

Find out more about women and therapy classes

Reconnect with some students to touch base about their school and endeavors

Contact/follow up with everyone 3 mins wasn't enough!

Contact #4 about research/publication ethics

Follow up with those I connected with. Lots of potential for collaborative projects

Follow up on interests and learn more about facilitating groups in this way

Follow up with those that I made a connection with and had similar interests

Definitely get involved and follow through with personal projects

Reach out to those people who had shared interests- especially librarians- will be good to know these

Connecting with #7! Researching more grad schools

# Participant Results... In Their Own Words

"I did follow up with another participant.

He's in a different stage of his career than I am, but he actually just emailed me yesterday with a job opportunity within his lab and it's a really good job. And he offered to help me in any way he could, he's a grad student and I'm an undergrad. It was great timing, he just emailed me yesterday, but we did meet for coffee before that too."

-Undergrad Student

"There were follow-ups with the College of Public Health and Health Professions. We did set up face-to-face meetings with some of them as a result of the CoLAB. We ended up forming a co-master's degree where students in the College of Public Health can take a series of our classes as an option. So yes, that definitely, that's what came of it."

-Faculty Member and Associate Dean

# Follow-Up Interview Quotes

"I researched several things so when actually having to do the CoLAB and having to then explain it to someone else, I found myself explaining one specific leg of my research, which then also helped me see that this is the leg that's most palatable to everyone, you know what I mean? So that helped me select it for my dissertation."

-PhD Student

"I would say the main benefit of the CoLAB for me was having all those people in one place. If I needed to reach out to one of the people who participated it would be so much easier now that you had the first networking step, to say, hey, we were in the same CoLAB and now I'm thinking of this project."

-College of Journalism Grants Coordinator

# Organization Representative Results

- Increased awareness of other organization's programs
- Brainstorming about solving community issues through shared resources
- Lots of new relationships with people that have the potential to improve services
- Meeting those like-minded individuals with similar goals
- Many strong prospects for collaborative opportunities yet to be discovered
- Sharing of thoughts and ideas, networking and motivation never before achieved in a workshop setting
- Discovering common challenges, like providing successful programming for teens
- Sense of how dissimilar organizations can share resources to serve a variety of populations
- Broader vision of the needs and assets resulting in an expanded circle of influence
- Increased self-confidence in the ability to be successful
- A new commitment to reach out to minority and ethnically diverse groups
- Recognizing and discovering one's own resources

# CoLAB Planning Series®: “Speed Meeting” Instructions

- Find a participant you do not know
- Jot down the participant’s # on your list so you will remember who you spoke to
- Read your partner’s card
- Converse for 3 minutes
- You may sit or stand or move to a quiet area
- Take brief notes (no need to capture contact info)
- When you hear the bell, say good-bye and find a new stranger

# Participants Receive Checklists

Collaborating with Strangers Checklist

Sustainability CoLAB

- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| #4  | built environment → studying local gardening                         |
| #22 | parking garage gardens!  |
| #51 | Urban planning faculty - sea levels                                  |
| #59 | Latin American Collection - ethnohistory                             |
| #8  | Studies, <sup>Sociology + Sustainability!</sup><br>Social justice ed |
| #17 | Telecomm Major - can help w/ video projects                          |
| #49 | Green Energy Development, windmills                                  |
| #69 | Biomedical Engineer → expert in computer programming                 |
| #47 | Fullbright Fellow, evaluation of ecosystems                          |
| #29 | Works for E-learning Support Services                                |
| #18 | Creative Writing Major - Are UF's investments sustainable?           |
| #28 | Involved in Gators for a Sustainable Campus                          |

# Idea Board Questions

- 1) What synergy or connection did you discover?
- 2) What did you learn?
- 3) What is your next step?

# Idea Table Instructions

- 1. On the index card, write your number at the top.
- 2. List a few CoLABers (#s or names) with whom you would like to follow-up and about what....
- 3. When finished, look up and wait for next instructions.

# Wrap-Up...

- Complete evaluation survey on back of sign
- Quick closing comments
- Return sign, Sharpie and other supplies
- Keep your checklist
- Keep index card as a reminder of those you want to contact
- Next step is to LOOK for post-workshop email message



# Future of CoLAB Planning Series

## Collaborating with Strangers Workshop Training-in-a-Box

How can you learn to connect faculty, staff, students, librarians or community members with "hidden" assets during speed-meetings?



*P&G*

# We Welcome Your Questions...



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